

# **SAN RAMON'S FOOD SCRAP RECYCLING PROGRAM**

## **What is the food scrap recycling program?**

The food scrap recycling program collects food scraps and food-soiled paper to be recycled into compost instead of going into the garbage. San Ramon residents may place food items and soiled paper products into their green waste cart for weekly collection.

## **What items can be recycled in my green waste cart?**

All food products: fruit, vegetables, breads, cereal, baked goods, rice, pasta, potatoes, dairy, butter, cheese, eggs, yogurt, meat, poultry, fish, seafood, bones, nuts, coffee grounds, tea bags, peels, pits, shells, and husks.

Food Soiled Paper Products: **paper** towels, plates, cups, cup holders, napkins, pizza boxes, bags, lunch sacks, sandwich wrappers, burger boxes, take-out containers, pop corn bags, egg cartons, ice cream/milk/juice cartons, straw covers, coffee filters, soiled newspaper and grocery bags.

Yard Trimmings: plants, grass, leaves, pine needles, weeds, flowers, twigs, branches, roots, vines.

Wood: **Clean** (no paint, no stain, no coating) lumber, pallets, crates, sawdust, chop sticks, tooth picks, skewers.

## **What items cannot be recycled in my green waste cart?**

Plastic bags, other plastic, Styrofoam, ketchup/sauce packets, glass, metal, wire, ceramics, dishes, utensils, straws, flower pots, rock, concrete, soil, sod, pet waste, yucca, palm, cactus, lawn furniture, pet toys, tennis balls, hoses, painted/stained/coated wood, pressure-treated wood, liquids, and yard trimmings that are too large to fit in the cart with the lid closed.

## **Do I have to participate in the food scrap recycling program?**

No. Like all recycling programs in San Ramon, the food scrap recycling program is voluntary. Also, there is no cost to participate.

## **How do I store my food scraps in my home and get them to the cart?**

Suggestions for in-home containers include:

Re-usable containers: a conventional plastic or metal waste basket, "Tupperware" or similar plastic container, plastic or metal mixing bowl, bucket or pail.

Compostable containers: paper bag, pizza box, cereal box, ice cream carton, milk or juice carton, take-out food containers (no plastic or Styrofoam.)

### **Can I place my food scraps in a plastic bag or wrap them in plastic wrap?**

Yes. However, you would have to empty them out of the bag/wrapper when placing them into your green waste cart, and throw the bag/wrapper in your garbage cart, as plastic is not acceptable at the composting facility. Alternatively, you could line your in-home food scrap container with newspaper or a paper bag. Compostable "plastic" bags are also acceptable. Look for the "compostable" label. Compostable "plastic" "bio-bags" can be purchased at Whole Foods Market, 100 Sunset Dr. in San Ramon.

### **Will putting food scraps in my green waste cart cause odors or attract insect and animals?**

Placing your food scraps into your green waste cart is not significantly different in terms of potential odors or pests than placing your food scraps into your garbage cart. The main difference is that the food scraps are usually in plastic bags inside of the garbage cart and are generally loose inside of the green waste cart. Make sure the lids are closed on both carts. It is also a good practice to cover any food scraps at the top of your green waste cart with a layer of yard trimmings.

### **Why not just dispose of my food scraps in the sink/garbage disposal?**

You may continue to do so. However, garbage disposals increase water and energy use, and placing food scraps down the drain contributes to clogged pipes in homes and in the sanitary sewer system. Food scraps increase the costs for the waste water treatment plant, and the resulting "sludge" or "bio-solids" is often unsuited for agriculture and is used at the landfill to bury garbage. Also, the soiled paper products accepted in the food scrap recycling program cannot be disposed of down the garbage disposal or placed in the recycling cart with clean paper. You may choose to recycle your soiled paper products in your green waste cart, even if you continue to use your in-sink garbage disposal for your food scraps.

### **How is this different from back yard composting?**

Materials such as meat and bones, which should not be composted in back yard systems, can be collected and processed in the food scrap recycling program. The food scrap recycling program is a convenient alternative for people who don't have time or space to compost and allows them to recycle almost everything.

### **What is compost?**

Compost is a valuable product used by farmers and landscapers. Compost enriches the soil, conserves water, provides erosion control and grows healthier plants and crops. It reduces the need for petrochemical fertilizers, insecticides, and pesticides.

### **Why recycle food scraps?**

Food scraps and food-soiled paper are the largest unrecycled portion of the residential waste stream, making up over 35 percent of what residents throw away. By turning food scraps into compost, residents are able to help save landfill space, and return valuable nutrients to the soil, and create compost.

### **Food scrap recycling reduces green house gases**

There are essentially two ways that food scrap recycling reduces Green House Gases (GHGs): 1) by removing organics from the landfill we reduce methane production; and 2) through the use of compost made from food scraps. Food scraps emit more methane than any other material in the landfill. Keeping food scraps out of the landfill reduces the amount of methane produced. Methane is 23 times more potent a GHG than Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The use of compost improves soil quality, increases crop yield, and reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides, which are extremely energy intensive to make and transport. Transporting water for agriculture is energy intensive; compost use helps soil retain water and reduces water consumption.